



EDITORIAL

Refining the changes. Or, how to modify the shape, not the spirit

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In the January issue of the *European Respiratory Journal (ERJ)* we outlined some of the issues that we felt to be important in the peer-review process [1], and hoped that the changes we were about to implement would reduce the reviewing turnaround time. Six months on, we are proud to announce that the median length of time it takes for authors to be notified with a first decision about their manuscript has reduced from 32 to 20 days. As we believe a further reduction in this turnaround time to be an unrealistic aim, we are starting to explore new ways in which to reshape the Journal without changing its core content and spirit. One such possibility would be to strengthen the links between the Journal and the scientific activities of the European Respiratory Society (ERS), while at the same time making the *ERJ* more attractive to a broader readership.

To achieve the first aim, the *ERJ* will try to regularly publish "Updates" papers from the 11 Scientific Assemblies of the ERS. The first Updates paper was published last month by the Respiratory Infections Assembly; the article analysed major advances in lower respiratory tract infections and tuberculosis that were presented by some of the best abstracts seen at the 18th ERS Congress in Berlin in 2008 [2]. A second Update paper will be published in an upcoming issue of the *ERJ*, and will describe the most recent advances in some of the major paediatric respiratory diseases [3].

In order to reach the second target, the *ERJ* will try to identify specific topics that will shape the future of respiratory medicine; papers related to these topics will then be published in a new section entitled Breakthrough in Respiratory Medicine. These manuscripts may describe an original study evaluating new techniques; for example, the use of fibred confocal fluorescence microscopy as a tool for imaging the alveolar respiratory system *in vivo* during bronchoscopy, as recently described by THIBERVILLE *et al.* [4]. Alternatively, the Breakthrough in Respiratory Medicine section may feature a review that critically evaluates a series of new techniques using different approaches to address the same clinical issue. For

example, in the *ERJ*, WILLIAMSON *et al.* [5] review the contribution of quantitative computed tomography airway imaging and videobronchoscopy in the quantification of tracheobronchial tree dimensions.

If reshaping implies adding new bodies, it also often requires removal of parts from a pre-existing structure, to allow for change without expansion. Applying this principle to the Journal, we have decided to call a halt to the publication of Case for Diagnosis articles and to modify the format of Case Reports, reducing their length to that of Letters. As a result, from now on, Case Studies providing new knowledge on aetiology, mechanisms, diagnosis or treatment of a disease will be published in the format of Letters, whereas Correspondence will relate to articles previously published in the Journal and will appear in a separate Correspondence section. From an authorship point of view, further information regarding the composition of Letters and Correspondence can be found on our online Instructions for Authors at www.erj.ersjournals.com/misc/ifora.dtl

Evolution is about change and adaptability. For a scientific journal like the *ERJ*, we believe changes are necessary to adapt to new situations. It is difficult, however, to be absolutely certain that the changes we make will increase the number and broaden the spectrum of our readership. This is why we, as always, welcome any feedback from you, members of the ERS and readers of the *ERJ* alike, to make this Journal yours.

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

A statement of interest for V. Brusasco can be found at www.erj.ersjournals.com/misc/statements.dtl

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